Refuge

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Refuge

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Summary

Galahad looks like a drowned puppy, hair slicked to his face and small body shaking. Still in his riding clothes that he had not managed to remove or change out of before -

"My bloody tent blew away," he mutters, crawling in to sit beside Tristan and working the flap closed again with cold slippery fingers.

The best way to keep warm is skin to skin contact.

Notes

Just some fun with the boys again. More sass. More sex. These two are growing on us rather quickly.

The storm came suddenly, with little onset beyond the smell of ozone and Temtsel returning to Tristan on her own. Tents went up quickly, horses secured and belongings stored before the rains hit in earnest, hammering on the oiled canvas overhead, a white noise near impenetrable.

Tristan settles back to listen, eyes barely open as he breathes in the way the rain brings life to the earth. Roots long thirsty now drink their fill, dust now smeared to mud and filling in the cracks the earth had begun to dig in her displeasure.

Everything living, a cycle, over and over.

There is a sound beyond, a high yelp and a curse, a whine of branches and the hissing of something being dragged away. With no sound of swords or whistling arrows, Tristan does little more than tilt his head towards the tent flap secured with a careful knot.

For a moment, nothing. Then a brief darkening of shadow against the front of the tent, and a shaking hand slips through to work the flap open.

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"My bloody tent blew away," he mutters, crawling in to sit beside Tristan and working the flap closed again with cold slippery fingers.

Tristan makes a considering sound, watching water slick in rivulets from Galahad's armor and spatter to the woven wool of his paenula, spread across the ground beneath. "You're wet."

"It's - yes," Galahad answers with a laugh. "It's raining, a little. Just a little. You probably didn't notice it, you know, just a trickle -"

"I noticed," Tristan quietly corrects him. He closes his eyes again, and stretches long, with little mind or care for how it cramps the younger knight in the space hardly big enough for one. "I noticed that you are dripping where I plan to sleep."

Galahad curses, shakes his head and runs a hand through his hair to peel it from his face.

"Sorry."

In truth, there is little he can do beyond leave the tent again and face the rain. There perhaps will be room enough to sleep together, curled close like puppies in a pile, but not room enough to stretch to be genuinely comfortable. Galahad swallows, shivering, and directs his eyes to Tristan again. He had hoped he would get his tent, though he had been seeking blind in the torrent.

"I can -"

“Remove your dripping things?” Tristan asks agreeably. The little flame from his lamplight sputters in the wind that carries through tent seams, casting the knights in shadow. He listens to the silence, filled with storm, of Galahad beside him, a quaint consternation at the offer Tristan has so readily made.

Arm slung across his eyes, when Tristan does not hear the hear the click of buckles and straps, he peeks from beneath, amusement pressed across his lips.

“You may stay,” he allows, unbothered and unconcerned as he is with all things. “So long as you do not stay wet. And tomorrow I will teach you how to properly tie down a tent.”

"I can properly tie -" A huff of air and Galahad doesn’t bother to argue more, working off his boots first, to set them alongside Tristan’s at the end of the tent at their feet. Next, the rest. Leather heavy with water, cotton much the same. Piece by piece until Galahad needs to push to his knees to work the buckles as his belt, and curses when it sticks.

He is far enough frustrated to care little for the wearability of his clothes, though he knows he will regret his decision come morning when they have to ride out and he spends most of the gallop holding up his clothes at his hips. He drops to all fours, leaning and reaching for his knife to cut the damn belt free, uncaring for the man behind him who watches, amused.

Galahad’s only just grasped its handle when his wrist is snared in turn. Tristan sits up, slowly, as if half-asleep already, and works the younger knight’s fingers from around the leather-wrapped handle to toss it to the ground beside.

“Let me go,” huffs Galahad, and Tristan makes a simple sound, just a hum, to indicate that he will not.

“Where will you find new clothing when you cut this to tatters? As if that knife is sharp enough to cut through leather.”

Galahad tries to tug his hand free but Tristan follows the motion without release, before returning it to Galahad’s thigh. On his knees and one hand, he watches Tristan across his shoulder, as the knight settles to his knees and with his free hand, touches across the ties of his armored skirt.

“The leather has swelled, in the rain.”

“So cut it loose.”

Tristan hums again.

“I want to sleep, Tristan. Should I go back to my tent, half-bare? Is that what it will take?”

“Your tent is halfway to Rome by now,” observes Tristan, and with his palm, lifts the woolen tunic and leather flaps to bare Galahad’s thighs to him. “You should stay with me,” he adds, the stripes of ink across his cheeks rising in pleasure to torment the younger man so. “I’d like it if you did.”

Galahad snorts, shakes his head and ducks it even as Tristan's hands don't move. Or, do move, in a direction that makes Galahad push up higher on his knees trying to shift away from it.

"You told me to remove anything that would dampen the paenula. I'm trying."

Clever fingers, rough with work and war, release the younger knight's wrist and instead press against Galahad's thighs, enough for him to shift them wider to remain balanced. Briefly, the tent lights with a flare of lightning, thunder following almost immediately after; the storm is above them properly now. Galahad keeps one hand out for balance as the other ventures to his belt again, tugging it futilely before he just laughs, pressing back against the knight behind him who holds his weight so easily.

"It won't come undone," he sighs.

"It will not until it dries," Tristan says, and when he does his breath is near enough to warm rain-chilled thighs and ripple goosebumps across Galahad's skin. "You must wait for it."

"I must what?"

"Wait for it."

"I heard you," hisses Galahad, feigning his annoyance over a visible curiosity as he watches Tristan over his shoulder. The look lasts only for a moment before Tristan spreads a kiss along Galahad's bare backside, nuzzling against the subligaculum wrapped around his groin to maintain his modesty. It's a charming habit, and Tristan has yet to tire of unwinding the fabric from Galahad's hips - he has yet to bore of exploring the secret skin beneath.

"I will amuse you until then," Tristan decides. He sets his fingers to the soft fabric and finds the loop where it holds fast, slipping it free to untwist, stitch by stitch baring the younger knight.

"I'll be cold," Galahad says, a weak protest as already he lowers to his elbows, already his head bows and his hips raise.

Tristan only smiles, tracing wide kisses over the swell of Galahad's backside. "Then I will make sure you're kept warm."

Galahad just rolls his eyes, amused but silent, keeping up the stoic front of being displeased by the situation instead of genuinely delighted. Of course, he would rather his tent were not smeared all over the countryside, but he could have chosen a worse one to seek shelter in.

The first time they had done this, they had been hot with wine and summer, and far enough out on a scout that no one would see them. It had been seeking hands and demanding mouths and too much laughter. The satisfaction had come the morning after, when both had been more awake, when both had soothed their headaches with yet more wine and their rubbing had led to groaned, sweaty release.

Since then it had happened once or twice more. At night when they could not be seen, Galahad's knuckles between his teeth so they were not heard. Once or twice by the dying embers of the fire, with the younger knight leaning back against the older, knees splayed and head back until he was shaking with what his clever fingers could do. Once or twice in each other's tents, mouths barely meeting as they tried to catch their breaths together and found themselves unable.

Galahad tenses, now, not in genuine aversion but because it's fun to have Tristan work to pull a smile from him, to pull those soft sighs and little sounds from him.

The older knight sighs low and vocal when the last twist of fabric slips free from Galahad's hips. He rumples it, tosses it aside, returns his hands to the younger man's legs and sinks a kiss into the crevice of his thighs. Tongue trailing over his balls, still sweet with river water from the icy bath that Galahad managed before the storm blackened the sky, Tristan follows the dark line upwards over a swath of smooth skin, and tries not to grin when despite himself, Galahad shudders forward.

"They'll hear us," he warns.

"As if they haven't already."

"They haven't! Have they?"

"You are hardly subtle beside the fire, squirming against me."

"*I'm* not subtle?"

"Just because they cannot see our hands -"

"Your hands."

"Very well," agrees Tristan, and his thumbs press Galahad's ass wider, stroking over flushed, wrinkled skin, to watch the younger knight tremble in anticipation for the heated kiss that Tristan sucks against his opening. His leather stinks of sweat and horses, of blood and battle, its edges scraping against Tristan's cheek as he buries his face beneath and laps with soft clicking sounds loud enough that the rain does not drown them out.

Galahad's entire body breaks out into a shiver, tension prickling beneath his skin like a thousand needles, eyes closing because he cannot keep them open if he tried, and lips parting on a sound he immediately muffles with his arm. Around them, the storm rages, but Galahad's hearing is honed in only on the sucking sounds behind him, the clicks of a swallow, the hush of breath over him before the divine torment returns.

He can feel himself twitch between his legs, reluctantly hard when he had wanted nothing more than to crawl into his tent to sleep, and then, denied that, to do the same here.

This, he supposes, is better. Much better. The white noise and howling wind around them enough to drown the small sounds he makes, for now, but he knows that as attuned as he is to

Tristan, so Tristan is to him. To every shiver and shudder and groan, to the sounds that can't be muffled by his hand because they come from the depths of his bones themselves.

"Incorrigible," he manages, breathless, one hand slipping against the floor to press fingertips to the side of the tent, curling to draw his nails down the canvas, and spread over it again.

Tristan need not remind Galahad that he came here, unbidden. He need not remind Galahad of the numerous other brothers-in-arms with whom he might have slept, nor that Tristan's tent was further away than all of them. He need not remind him that by intentional accident Galahad has found his way to Tristan's side, grumbling all the while, nearly every night for months.

That Tristan knows it is satisfaction enough, and the way Galahad's voice splinters into a moan that lasts long as the roll of thunder overhead is only a bonus.

Maybe he is, as Galahad says, incorrigible. Tristan considers it and as he does, he strokes the flat of his tongue as slowly as he can manage over Galahad's hole until the younger knight's shoulders give way and he presses his cheek to the paenula covering the ground. With Galahad's blood brother only a few tents removed, and wont to give a particularly narrow look to Tristan now that the lot of them have heard their joinings, it does feel a little wanton. Tristan pairs his lips against the scarlet skin that twitches in response, and sucks. His scruffy cheeks have reddened the soft skin of Galahad's ass where they've rubbed, and as Tristan draws away he hopes that it will not chafe the younger man when they ride in the morning.

He hooks his fingers around Galahad's cock, curving stiff and red, the foreskin pulled taut to reveal the shining, ruddy head beneath, and Tristan can't help but hide a smile against Galahad's ass as he bends his cock back, and Galahad's sides begin to heave, whimpering, like a horse overworked.

Before he can protest, Tristan takes the knight into his mouth, and swallows him deep.

Another moan masked by thunder, lightning flickering against them both as Galahad trembles hard against the floor and sinks his teeth into his arm so as not to make more noise than he must. And he must. He cannot stay quiet as Tristan sucks him this way, works his velvet-soft tongue over skin so sensitive it almost hurts. One knee slips against the floor and is caught to be placed in the crook of Tristan's elbow, to hold Galahad spread just as he is.

It is hard to stay stoic, hard to stay indifferent, when Galahad's body sings with pleasure from all of this.

"Let the bloody rain last through the day," he groans. "Let camp bog down for a while, just don't stop."

Tristan hums disapproval at tempting the Fates this way, but the noisome vibration only pitches Galahad's voice higher. He rocks backward, the same rolling motion as when they ride together, to slip further into Tristan's mouth. Cheeks hollow on a hard suck backwards, and Galahad nearly goes with him, pushing his backside higher, helpless to Tristan's perfectly guileless ministrations.

He does not stop. The tip of his tongue skims beneath the hood of his cock, slipping down to follow the swell of its head, and teasing back up to the slit atop to taste the clear slick pushing salty into his mouth. Galahad swears another blue curse, hardly able to keep rhythm in his hips now, when it's all he can do to stop from sprawling across the ground.

Tristan's breath puffs quick against sensitive skin, taking in what he can with Galahad leg's and ass surround him this way. When he draws back, however, the relentless rhythm drives faster - skilled fingers snare Galahad's cock in hand, and he pushes his mouth back against his opening hard enough to nearly push him to his shoulders. Unyielding, unrelenting, as when they spar or play together, and with a far sweeter victory in seeing the younger man come undone.

"Tristan -" It's a growl, low and guttural and enough to bare Galahad's teeth against his arm, rocking back and forth into it over and over, knowing there will be marks in the morning of his own teeth as evidence that he had tried to hold himself together.

He never can, though, not with the way Tristan undoes him, every time. To languid, liquid pleasure. As he does, now, cupping his hand to hold Galahad's release, still tonguing against him, moaning low, deep pleasure of his own against the younger knight as Galahad jerks and trembles, tries to understand why the ground is rocking beneath him when he opens his eyes.

He feels entirely spent, barely strong enough to keep himself on his knees when all he wants is to spread to the floor and close his eyes and sleep, pull the man bodily against him and sleep with him.

Another groan, relief, now, that melds in with the humming of the rain against their tent, against others'. At that moment Galahad could care less who hears them, if anyone.

Tristan sits back to his knees, breath shaking until he can steady it again. He rubs his clean hand over his mouth, as much to hide his grin as to wipe his spit away, and smears the other clean against his pants. Without mind for his own hardness, because he never minds it very much when Galahad makes him so stiff with just a glowering look or a smile or a flash of thigh against his saddle, Tristan snares Galahad around the waist and jerks him back.

The yelp, startled, is a delight, and Tristan huffs a laugh against the fine curls stuck with sweat to Galahad's neck, breathing in his relief and exhaustion and arousal.

"Next time you needn't waste a tent if you want to stay in mine," he tells Galahad, imagining the little moue of annoyance at the words, and knowing too how soon it breaks to a hidden smile, rubbed against the woven wool beneath them.

"You think highly of yourself," Galahad retorts, and shifts enough to turn to face Tristan instead, pushing against his shoulders enough to lay him back, for Galahad to slide down his thighs to rest over his hips instead, hands still pressing Tristan down. He swallows his biting words as he kisses Tristan instead, soft lips and another shiver through him as he tastes himself there.

"We will freeze in the night if we don't cover soon," he murmurs. He turns his face against Tristan and sets his knees wider over him for balance as one hand slips down to stroke him

through his pants, deliberate and pressing, over and over, to watch his expression shift to pleasure and a fluttering kind of need.

“The most effective way to stay warm is through body contact,” Tristan points out, and Galahad raises an eyebrow. “Especially in the mountains. During the colder nights and endless wind.”

“Keep your promise then,” Galahad tells him, bending to kiss him again as his hand moves to work open his - infuriatingly dry - belt.

Tristan does not move to help, but only kisses, relishing the sweep of lips against his own, the way Galahad’s tongue forces past his teeth. There is frustration in the kiss, shoving harder together when he fumbles unseeing with the belt, and though Tristan could easily remove it himself, he is content to wait. Rather, he skims his fingers up Galahad’s thighs, over soft hair and beneath the damp leather of his armor.

Galahad notes, with furrowed brows and another furious kiss, when Tristan’s amusement bends his mouth beneath, parting only to laugh when Galahad finally jerks his belt free.

“Perhaps we should go bare instead,” Tristan suggests mildly. “Though I do not think it would ease your brother’s displeasure with us.”

“With you,” Galahad tells him, shoving Tristan’s hands to his side, out from beneath his malingering leathers. They return after a few moments more, around to cup his ass, fanning teasing fingers across his crevice, still damp.

“My brother,” Galahad hums, “is as all brothers are. It is because you are brothers in bond that he does not attempt retribution.” The thought immediately makes Galahad laugh and he buries the sound against Tristan’s neck and kisses there as well, gentle and fond, as his fingers finally press past the pants pressing tight between Tristan’s legs with how hard he is.

A groan, soft, between them, and Galahad begins to stroke Tristan in earnest.

“Bare would keep us warm,” he points out, delighting in pulling those sounds of breathlessness from Tristan, now, though the man is rarely as vocal as Galahad is. “Warm will keep us alive.”

“If you take out the proxy -”

“- he can’t fault my need for self preservation,” Galahad murmurs, grinning wide as he turns his wrist.

Tristan arches from the ground, a sinuous curve to bring his hips higher, his cock deeper into the hot grasp of Galahad’s hand around him. He lets out a little puff of sound, a low groan, nearly a laugh, nearly a moan, while clever fingers work him to dripping, squeezing tight around the head, spreading wide and snaring firm against the thick curls of hair at the base.

“Who could?” The older knight mutters, keeping one hand on Galahad’s thigh as the other unlaces his tunic and tugs it awkwardly over one arm, off his head. That hand then sets high

against the younger man's bare hip, and the other comes free to expose his chest entirely, densely furred but for the dark nipples peaked beneath.

They are set upon, and Tristan tightens his teeth with a shudder of pleasure before Galahad even reaches them. His tongue swipes rough across one, then the other, tugging curled hairs long before his lips close with a hum, a suck, and Tristan tries fruitlessly to kick off his pants as Galahad besieges his body. He plays at distance, at propriety and decency, resisting the endless little grabs and strokes and molestations that Tristan teases him with relentlessly throughout the day, and Tristan is glad to pay for his feisty fingers in private, beneath the young knight who makes him dizzy with his onslaught.

It is rubbing and heat, kisses smeared against cheeks and over slack lips, eyes closed and breaths hot between them. Galahad does not relent with his teeth or his hands, twisting and pulling against Tristan until he earns his voice, though quiet, and relishes the victory of that.

The storm does not ease around them, lashing the tent with rain and wind, the two within it uncaring at all beyond when their skin breaks out in goosebumps and they bury themselves together under wool and any cover they can manage, bare and hot together.

They don't sleep till early morning, and wake only because Tristan is too attuned, too used to hearing and analyzing the sounds around them. The rain still pours, their brothers decide with loud cursing and mumbled grumbling that a few more hours of rest can't hurt. They inquire as to where Galahad could have been blown away to, if his horse remains and his tent does not, and laugh, amused, when they don't need to guess.

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